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**ana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings, MT 59105  
August 19, 1994

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, POB 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704  
Dept. of Health and Environmental Sciences, Director's Office, Cogswell Building, POB 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Director's Office  
Parks Division  
Fisheries Division, Bruce Rehwinkel  
Wildlife Division  
Lands Section  
Design and Construction  
Legal Unit  
Mary Ellen McDonald  
Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, POB 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1201  
Montana State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 595, Helena, MT 59624  
Carbon County Commissioners, Box 887, Red Lodge, MT 59068  
Montana Wildlife Federation, POB 1175, Helena, MT 59624-1175  
Soil Conservation Service, Carbon County Office, Box J, Joliet, MT 59041

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been Prepared for the Cooney Reservoir State Park Improvement Project, and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Thursday, September 22, 1994. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 252-4654. All comments should be sent to the undersigned at 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Ray Berntsen  
Regional Parks Manager

KO:plw

Enc.

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

OCT 14 1994

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620

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# MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

## PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action State Park County Access Road Improvement Project
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Carbon County
3. Name of Project Cooney Reservoir State Park County Access Road Improvement Project
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)
5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date Fall 1994

Estimated Completion Date Fall 1995

Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 40%

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

3.8 Miles of Carbon County Road, Sections 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35, T4S, R21E, Sections 25 and 36, T4S, R20E, Sections 25, 34, 35 and 36, T4S, R20E, and Sections 2 and 3, T5S, R20E.

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

| Acres                               |          | Acres              |           |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|
| (a) Developed:                      |          | (d) Floodplain     |           |
| residential                         | _____    |                    |           |
| industrial                          | _____    | (e) Productive:    |           |
|                                     |          | irrigated cropland | _____     |
| (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation | <u>0</u> | dry cropland       | _____     |
|                                     |          | forestry           | _____     |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas         | <u>0</u> | rangeland          | <u>15</u> |
|                                     |          | other              | _____     |

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

Topographic Map attached.

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The proposed action is to improve approximately 3.8 miles of the existing county and park roads which provide access to Cooney Reservoir State Park. Funding for the project is to be provided by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Carbon County would administer the project and construct or contract for construction the above described work to bring the road to county road standards. The county would, in addition, maintain the road after completion of work.

The general intent and benefits of the proposal is to upgrade traffic safety, increase capacity, and reduce maintenance costs to the county.

10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

| <u>Agency Name</u>                                                 | <u>Permit</u>     | <u>Date Filed/#</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Carbon County                                                      | Sign Placement    |                     |
| Carbon County                                                      | Approach          |                     |
| Carbon County                                                      | Weed Control Plan |                     |
| MT Historical Society,<br>State, Historical<br>Preservation Office | SHPO Consultation |                     |

(b) Funding:

| <u>Agency Name</u>                      | <u>Funding Amount</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife<br>and Parks | \$360,000             |

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

| <u>Agency Name</u>                      | <u>Type of Responsibility</u>                    |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Carbon County                           | Securing right of way and project administration |
| MT Dept. of Fish,<br>Wildlife and Parks | Environmental analysis and compliance            |

**11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Montana Department of Transportation

Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office

Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Promotion Bureau

Carbon County Commissioners and Road Department

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| LAND RESOURCES                                                                                                                          | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                         | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                                     |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?                                                                                |          |      | X      |                         | Yes                      | See 1a. Below |
| b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?                                                   |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?                                  |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. Other: N/A                                                                                                                           |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The project will result in some soil instability if either of the road widening Alternatives (C or D) are selected. The instability would result from new cut and fill slopes created during the widening process and wind and/or water erosional forces. The impact will be mitigated by minimizing the height of fill slopes and steepness of cut slopes. Erosion control will be enhanced by seeding bare slopes with native grass mixtures.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| AIR                                                                                                                                           | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                               | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                                           |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)                                                     |          |      | X      |                         | Yes                      | See 2a. Below |
| b. Creation of objectionable odors?                                                                                                           |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?                      |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?                                                  |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. *For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.) |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. Other: N/A                                                                                                                                 |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. The current road surface is dirt/gravel and a considerable amount of dust is generated by vehicles traveling the road when it is dry. None of the proposed alternatives will likely increase dust levels (air pollution), but Alternative D would greatly reduce dusty conditions. Elevated levels of dust can be expected during the construction phase under all alternatives. Dust created during the construction phase can be mitigated by utilizing water trucks to moisten the road surface.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| 3. WATER                                                                                                                                              | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                                       | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                                                   |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| ➤ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?                                                                             |          |      | X      |                         | Yes                      | See 3b. Below |
| c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?                                                                               |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?                                                          |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?                                                                          |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?                                                                                                             |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?                                                                                                            |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?                                                                                       |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?                                                                                                |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?                                                      |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?                                                           |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| l. **For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)                                                                     |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| m. *For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)                 |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| n. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                                                                  |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3b. Selection of Alternatives C and D will result in increased runoff from the road surface. The road will be designed, under these alternatives, so water effectively runs off the road surface for safety considerations. These effects can be mitigated through drainage design and seeding all bare slopes with grass.

- \* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the Impact is unknown, explain why the unknown Impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| 4. <u>VEGETATION</u><br>Will the proposed action result in:                                                                          | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                      | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)? |          |      | x      |                         |                          | See 4a. Below |
| b. Alteration of a plant community?                                                                                                  |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?                                                           |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?                                                                    |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?                                                                                         |          |      | x      |                         | Yes                      | See 4e. Below |
| f. **For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?                                                    |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| g. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                                                 |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Selection of Alternative C and D, which would widen the road, will required the removal of existing vegetation (sagebrush, low shrubs, and grasses) along the entire roadway for up to 40 feet from the existing road. Alternatives A and B would have little or not effect on vegetation adjacent to the existing road.

4e. Road construction activities that expose mineral soil can facilitate the spread of noxious weeds. Alternatives B, C and D will all likely create conditions conducive to the spread of weeds. Disturbed areas will be required to be reseeded with native grass species to reduce the potential for noxious weed establishment and spread. In addition, ongoing county weed control efforts will be utilized to prevent weed growth along the roadway.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

▶ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

# **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

| <p>► <b>5. FISH/WILDLIFE</b></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p>                                                                                                | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                            | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?                                                                                                                     |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?                                                                                                  |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?                                                                                                               |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Introduction of new species into an area?                                                                                                                               |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?                                                                                                          |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?                                                                                                 |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?                    |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| h. **For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.) |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| i. *For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)                        |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| j. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                                                                                       |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative needed):

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

► Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS                                                                                    | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                            |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Increases in existing noise levels?                                                                         |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?                                                       |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?                                              |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                           |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 7. LAND USE                                                                                                        | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                    | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?       |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?              |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?                                                                 |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                               |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS                                                                                                                                                                        | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                               | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                                                                                           |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?                                                                                        |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?                                                                                                                                   |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. *For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)                                                                                                                          |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Other: <u>N/A</u>                                                                                                                                                                          |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 9. COMMUNITY IMPACT                                                                                                        | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                            | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                        |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |
| a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?                   |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?                                                                      |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?                                  |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?                                                                           |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods? |          | X    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. Other:                                                                                                                  |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u><br>Will the proposed action result in:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | IMPACT*  |      |        |                            | Can Impact<br>Be<br>Mitigated* | Comment<br>Index |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially<br>Significant |                                |                  |
| a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: |          |      | x      |                            |                                | See 10a below    |
| b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?                                                                                                                                                |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| ► e. Define projected revenue sources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |          |      |        |                            |                                | See 10e below    |
| ► f. Define projected maintenance costs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |      |        |                            |                                | See 10f below    |
| g. Other:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |      |        |                            |                                |                  |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. If road improvements are undertaken, Carbon County road maintenance services will be altered. The immediate effect of road improvements will be the reduction of road maintenance needs. If a paved surface is selected, there will be the need for more specialized maintenance in the future (i.e. chip sealing, striping, etc.)

10e. The revenue source will be highway fuel tax.

10f. Maintenance costs on the county road will be the responsibility of Carbon County. These costs are not immediately known, but the County estimates that these costs can be handled within their regular road maintenance program. The costs to maintain the roads within the park will remain as they are currently, which is approximately \$1,000 per year.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| ► 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u><br>Will the proposed action result in:                                                                | IMPACT*  |      |        |                            | Can Impact<br>Be<br>Mitigated* | Comment<br>Index |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
|                                                                                                                                          | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially<br>Significant |                                |                  |
| a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?                  |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?                                                                 |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| ► c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings?                                           |          |      | x      |                            |                                | See 11c below    |
| d. *For P-R/D-L, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a. and 11c.) |          | x    |        |                            |                                |                  |
| e. Other:                                                                                                                                |          |      |        |                            |                                |                  |

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The quality of recreational opportunities will be increased by providing a safer and better quality access to Cooney Reservoir State Park.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u><br>Will the proposed action result in:                                       | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                       | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance? |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?                                                          |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?                                                    |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. **For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources?                                             |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Other:                                                                                                             |          |      |        |                         |                          |               |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE<br>Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:                                                                                                                                           | IMPACT*  |      |        |                         | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Unknown* | None | Minor* | Potentially Significant |                          |               |
| a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.) |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?                                                                                                                     |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?                                                                                                  |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?                                                                                                                  |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?                                                                                                                                 |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| f. *For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)                                                                                                    |          | x    |        |                         |                          |               |
| g. **For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.                                                                                                                                                                        |          |      |        |                         |                          | See 13g below |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 13g. Sign Erection Permit  
Road Approach Permit  
County Weed Board Permit  
State Historic Preservation Office Consultation  
Storm Runoff Permit

- ☆ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.  
 ☆ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)  
 ☆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.  
 ☆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Four alternatives are being considered for the proposed action:

- A. Leave the road in its current condition (No Action Alternative). Under this alternative, the county and park road would be left in their current condition. The existing roadway is 19' to 22' wide which is substantially under the county standard of 26'. Several of the fill sections along the roadway appear to be higher than is necessary. The lack of roadway shoulders and high fill sections are safety hazards. Some existing drainage culverts are in poor condition. Complaints about the condition and safety of the road would continue. The current road condition would continue to limit the types of vehicles that could travel to Cooney Reservoir State Park.
- B. Resurface (with gravel) the Existing Roadway. Implementation of this alternative would be the least costly of the improvement alternatives. While this alternative would improve the ride and maintainability of the surface, inherent design and safety flaws would remain. This alternative would have the least impact of the improvement alternatives on various environmental and resource factors. This alternative would still require weekly grading to maintain a safe and suitable surface. Weekly grading is currently not possible and would be no more likely if more gravel were added to the road surface.
- C. Widen and Resurface (with gravel) Roadway. Under this alternative, the county roadway would be widened and the surface would be improved with gravel. The existing county roadway would be widened to 24' or 26', depending on costs. Widening to 26' is most desirable. Implementation of this alternative would correct all design and safety flaws identified in Alternative A, including roadway width, shoulders, fill slope height, vertical alignment, vertical sight distances, intersection alignments, culverts and drainage, and surfacing. The costs of this alternative would be greatly above Alternative B and slightly below Alternative D. Roadway safety would be greatly enhanced but vehicles would be expected to travel at a higher rate of speed. Environmental disturbance associated with the roadway widening would be higher under this alternative as compared to Alternative B. County road maintenance needs would remain high. High levels of dust would continue to be a problem under this alternative.
- D. Widen Roadway and Pave Surface. This alternative is the proposed action and the preferred alternative. Implementation of this alternative would bring the county road to a design standard equivalent to a Montana Department of Transportation secondary highway, with a 26' wide paved surface (see page 24 for Typical Section No. 1). All design and safety improvements described under Alternative C would be implemented with the exception that the road surface would be pavement.

The cost of this alternative would be the greatest of the four alternatives but only slightly above Alternative C. Safety factors would be highest under this alternative but the greatest vehicle speeds would be expected on a pavement surface. Environmental disturbance would be as high, or slightly higher, than Alternative C and would result

primarily from the roadway widening. Dust would be at minimal levels under this alternative. A pavement surface with lane widths identical to a secondary highway would allow all types of vehicles a smooth, comfortable drive to Cooney Reservoir State Park. This alternative would reduce short-term maintenance costs to Carbon County.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Specific mitigation measures are listed in the checklist, under the applicable item.

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

Based on the specific criteria evaluated in this EA, an EIS is not required. The EA is the appropriate level of evaluation as no significant impacts have been identified by this EA.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Articles about this proposed project have appeared in the Billings Gazette and the Carbon County News. This EA will be announced for a 30 day public comment period beginning Monday August 22 and ending Thursday September 22, 1994. This comment period will be published in the above newspapers, and copies of this EA will be mailed to the various interested groups and individuals listed in the cover letter.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

30 days, ending at 5 pm on Thursday, September 22, 1994.

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

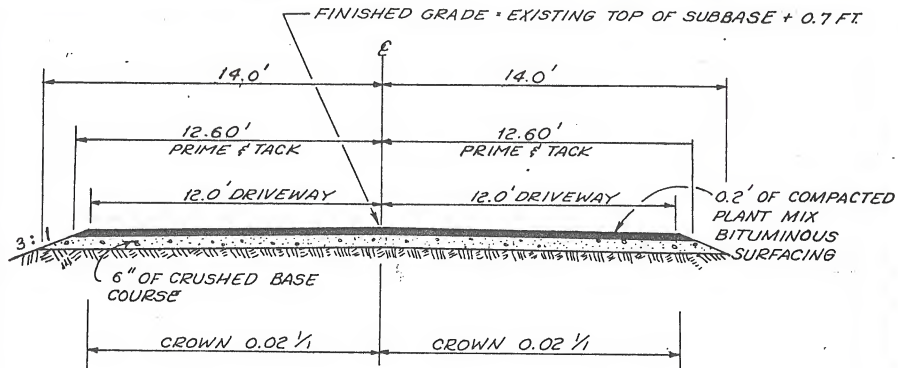
Ray Berntsen  
Regional Parks Manager  
2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings, MT 59105  
(406) 252-4654

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

HB 495 Narrative Discussion

The State Park Futures Committee cited extensive state park interior and county connecting road needs in their 1990 report to Governor Stephens. The committee recommended utilization of highway fuel tax dollars to fund these road projects.

The improvement of the county road to Cooney Reservoir State Park, and interior road and parking improvements is in line with the department's long range planning process. This project also works toward achievement of department goal "B" - by providing increased recreational opportunities, and department goal "C" - providing a quality state park system.



## **TYPICAL ROAD SECTION**

**COONEY DAM ROAD**

**MILE 2.9 TO MILE 6.7**

END PROJECT  
MILE 6.7

COONEY DAM

POTENTIAL SOURCE  
FOR AGGREGATE  
MATERIALS

CULVERT LOCATION

BEGIN PROJECT  
MILE 2.9

HWY 212

COONEY DAM ROAD  
ROAD AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT  
SITE MAP